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St. Lucie I.N.T.A.C.T. **An Inspired Network to Achieve Community Together**

October 20, 2006
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ST. LUCIE COUNTY LONG TERM DISASTER RECOVERY GROUP COORDINATES TRAINING WITH HURRICANE HOUSE

Fort Pierce – October 20, 2006 – St. Lucie INTACT, the long term disaster recovery organization is working in conjunction with the University of Florida/IFAS/St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension's Windstorm Damage Mitigation Training and Demonstration Center to provide mitigation training to area residents to help them better prepare for disasters. The Windstorm Center, otherwise known as "the Hurricane House," serves as the Treasure Coast's regional educational and demonstration facility for homeowners and builders to learn about wind-loss mitigation and methods of enhancing the wind resistance of existing and new housing. INTACT was recently awarded funding from the Volunteer Florida Foundation, which administers the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund. This funding will be used to harden low income homes against wind storm and water damage. Mitigation is defined as home modifications that make a home more resistant to wind damage. This may include installation of hurricane shutters, repair/replacement of doors/windows, and upgrades to roofing to minimize damage from wind and rain.

The Hurricane House will provide training to any area resident who is interested in learning more about wind resistance construction. The Hurricane House appears as a residential structure and is built using an insulated, reinforced concrete form (ICF) wall system. It also features a training room, with exterior wall cut-away sections covered with transparent panels illustrating existing ICF, "typical" wood frame, and "typical concrete block methods of construction. These sections reveal internal structural features, providing visual access to connectors, fasteners, reinforcing, and other structural features that either can be incorporated as part of an alternative building system or added to existing structures to increase wind resistance of the structure. The house also demonstrates window shuttering systems, door and roof strengthening, garage door bracing, and a safe room. The Hurricane House is located at St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension facility on Picos Road in Ft. Pierce.

St. Lucie INTACT (Inspired Network to Achieve Community Together) is the Long Term Recovery Organization whose mission is to strengthen disaster coordination in St. Lucie County, Florida by sharing information, simplifying resident access to services, and jointly resolving cases with disaster-caused recovery needs. INTACT provides collaborative leadership in the discernment of long-term needs for recovery and rehabilitation and advocates for individuals and families vulnerable to disaster events.

To facilitate access by area residents, mitigation classes are scheduled for both day, evening, and weekend hours. The first scheduled class dates are November 18, 10-1; November 29, 10-1; and December 13, 6-9. Class size is limited and registration is required. If you are a low income homeowner with homestead exemption and homeowner's insurance and are interested in having your home hardened against hurricanes, call 772-462-2093.